

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An automatic sampler comprising:
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a first coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a noble metal including platinum, a platinum group metal, or gold that is plated or deposited on said needle, and wherein a second coating material comprising a quartz thin film is formed on an inner surface of said needle by a chemical vapor deposition method.

Claim 2 (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) An ~~automatic sampler~~ liquid chromatograph comprising:
an automatic sampler including:
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface

coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a synthetic resin coating including polyetheretherketone that is coated on said needle, wherein the liquid chromatograph apparatus further comprises a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle.

Claim 4 (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) An automatic sampler comprising:
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a non-noble metal that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of iron and is plated or deposited on said needle, said non-noble metal including nickel or chromium.

Claim 6 (Cancelled)

Claim 7 (Cancelled)

Claim 8 (Cancelled)

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

Claim 10 (Cancelled)

Claim 11 (Cancelled)

Claim 12 (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) ~~An automatic sampler~~ A liquid chromatograph apparatus comprising:

an automatic sampler including:

a plurality of sample vessels; and

a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material is a noble metal including platinum, a platinum group metal, or gold,

wherein the liquid chromatograph apparatus further comprises a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~The automatic sampler~~ liquid chromatograph apparatus according to Claim ~~4~~ 13, wherein said ~~automatic sampler is included in an~~ instrument further ~~comprising:~~ comprises
~~— a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle; and~~

_____a rinsing means for rinsing the needle after collecting the liquid samples.

Claim 15 (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) The ~~automatic sampler~~ liquid chromatograph apparatus according to Claim 3, ~~wherein said automatic sampler is included in an instrument~~ further comprising:

_____a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle; and

_____a rinsing means for rinsing the needle after collecting the liquid samples.

Claim 17 (Cancelled)